BABY'S COMPLIMENT.

S. St. G. Lawrence, in Happenchance.

His father and mother were both away,
And Baby and I had been friends all day—
Many and gay were the games we played;
Baby ordered, and I obeyed—
We cared not at all for the rainy sky,
We built us a blockhouse three feet high;
We threw pine knots on the nursery fire
And watched the flames mount higher and higher.
We hid in the most improbable nooks,
We looked at the pictures in all his books;
We ran in "tag" till his cheeks were red,
And his curls were tangled about his head.
So when the twilight was closing down
Over the fields and the woodlands brown,
And nurse declared he must say good-night,
He clung to me still in the firelight—
He trampled my gown with his rough little feet,
He climbed on my lap and kissed me sweet,
And, as he scrambled from off my knee,
"You'd make a good mother," said Baby to me.

I have had compliments, now and then,
From grown-up women and grown-up men;
Some were commonplace, some were new,
Never was one of them rung so true,
Never was one seemed half so real—
Baby compared me to his Ideal!

AN EPISCOPAL SCANDAL.

It had been an eloquent sermon; the Bishop had been at his best. That was the general feeling. At the informal meeting which was held in the Dean's parlor the morning after, this feeling was strongly expressed.

"If," said Mr. Dean, "words can make men temperate, then surely the words which we were privileged to hear proceeding from the pulpit in our beloved cathedral yesterday afternoon must have carried conviction to many an erring soul."

So said all of them. Canon Gorse, in particular, felt bound to say that he had heard many temperance sermons in his time, but never one which had impressed him more strongly than the one which the Bishop had delivered yesterday to the clerical and lay workers in the cause of total abstinence. When the Canon made this outspoken declaration, every parson in the room—and every man of them had preached temperance sermons in his time, so they ought to have been good judges—exclaimed, "Hear, hear!"

Perhaps the enthusiasm was rendered greater by the fact that, until quite lately, the Bishop had scarcely been a stalwart. Always on the side of temperance—oh, yes, certainly that—but on the question, the vital question, of total abstinence his views had scarcely been so pronounced as some of his admirers, both clerical and lay, would have wished. Indeed, it was understood that the Bishop himself favored a good glass of wine at times. In fact, it was reported that he was even esteemed a connoisseur in the matter of certain Spanish wines which are nowadays esteemed old-fashioned. That this should have been so was, in a degree, unfortunate; because how could teetotalism, as a propaganda, assume those dimensions which were in every way desirable in a diocese, the bishop of which, as it was well known, himself looked with a by no means unloving eye on the wine when it is red? When, therefore, it was announced that, if only for example's sake, the Bishop would henceforth shun the spirit which is man's universal curse, it was felt, and rightly felt, that a victory had been won. That victory had, so to speak, been consummated by the Bishop's sermon in the cathedral yesterday, in which he declared himself a teetotaller, on the side of the teetotallers, and willing, nay, anxious, to stand in their forefront and to lead the van.

"One thing," observed Canon Gorse, "seems plain—that is, that we now shall be on safe ground in refusing to renew the lease of "The Rose and Crown." For that, thank goodness!"

Again the reverend Canon seemed but to give voice to the opinion of all who heard him. This question of The Rose and Crown had been as a thorn in the side of the cathedral chapter. The Rose and Crown was an inn which actually faced the door by means of which the choir and officiating clergy were wont to gain admittance to the sacred edifice. Sad tales were told of it: of how quarts of stout, and such like obnoxious fluids, had been sent in from The Rose and Crown to the choirmen while they had actually been engaged in practice, and other dreadful stories. The lease of the inn was running out. The landlord—one George Boulter—desired its renewal. The house and the ground upon which it stood were the property of the cathedral chapter. Mr. Boulter had already been privately notified that, in all probability, his lease would not be renewed. It was the desire of the chapter that the house should be transformed into a church institute. The only factor which might upon this point breed dissension had hitherto been the Bishop. But now, as the Bishop himself had signed the pledge, it seemed plain that, as Canon Gorse had observed, the scandal of a number of clergymen owning a public-house would be put an end to.

The Canon had scarcely uttered his remark when the libary door opened, and a servant, entering, advanced to Mr. Dean.

"Mr. Boulter, sir, says he wishes to see you most particular."

"Mr. Boulter!" exclaimed the Dean. The man himself, the landlord of The Rose and Crown. The Dean reflected. He rubbed his nose with his glasses. "What is it that Mr. Boulter can wish to say to me? However, I will see him. Tell him so." The servant vanished. The Dean turned to the assembled clergymen. "It is, perhaps, just as well that I should see the man at once, and let him know clearly what our position is."

"Exactly," said Canon Gorse. "Let him understand that plainly. It will not only be fair to ourselves, but it will also be fair to the man."

Mr. Boulter was a portly person; his countenance was ruddy; in manner he was affable. He was, all over, Mine Host of the Inn; a type of Boniface which, if we may believe the chroniclers, used to abound, but which, under the present advance of the teetotal forces, is, we will say fortunately, becoming extinct. He reverenced a gentleman, but above all things he reverenced the cloth. His motto as a boy had been "Church and Crown"; but in these latter days he had begun to fear that both Church and Crown were on the side of the enemy.

"Mr. Boulter," observed the Dean, as he entered the room in which that gentleman was waiting, "I am pressed for time. Indeed, I have a meeting in the library. I must therefore ask you to tell me in as few words as possible what it is you wish to say."

Mr. Boulter turned the brim of his hat round and round in his hands.

"It is about the lease, Mr. Dean."

"I thought so. I may as well be brief with you, and clear. You may take my word for it that the lease will not be renewed, and that, in short, The Rose and Crown will cease to be an inn."

"I think not, Mr. Dean."

"You think not, Mr. Boulter! May I ask what you mean?"

There was something in the tone in which Mr. Boulter said that he thought not which the Dean did not understand. He stared at Mr. Boulter with dignified surprise. Mr. Boulter actually smiled.

"I think that The Rose and Crown will continue to be an inn. That is what I meant, Mr. Dean."

The Dean shrugged his shoulders.

"If you choose to persist in thinking so, in spite of my assurance to the contrary, that is your affair, not mine."

The Dean turned to go, as if the interview were already at an end. Mr. Boulter coughed behind his hand.

"I should like to have one word with you before you go." The Dean faced around. "Then am I to tell my tale?"

"Your tale? What tale?"

"About the Bishop, Mr. Dean."

"About the Bishop?" The Dean looked the innkeeper up and down. A vague suspicion crossed his mind. Already, at this hour of the morning, could the man be drunk? There was nothing in the fellow's bearing to denote anything of the kind. And, indeed, it was matter of common notoriety that, personally, the landlord of The Rose and Crown was an abstemious man. But none the less there was at that particular moment something about Mr. Boulter's manner which the Dean was at a loss to understand. "What do you mean by your tale about the Bishop, sir?"

For a moment or two Mr. Boulter continued to turn his hat round and round in his hands, as if he found some difficulty in choosing the exact words in which to frame what he wished to say.

"I understand," he began at last, "that yesterday the Bishop preached a sermon upon temperance."

"You understand quite rightly. It would have done you good, Mr. Boulter, to have heard that sermon. Had you done so, you would understand how strong would be the Bishop's opposition to any renewal of the lease of The Rose and Crown."

"Indeed!" Mr. Boulter's tone was dry. "I am not so sure of that."

The Dean stared. The man's manner was so very odd.

"Be so good, Mr. Boulter, as to say plainly what it is you mean."

"I don't know what you think, sir, of a Bishop who comes straight from preaching a sermon on temperance into my public house."

"Mr. Boulter!"

"It's no good your looking at me like that, sir. I was surprised, I don't mind owning it. But just let me tell my tale."

The Dean let him tell his tale.

"Yesterday afternoon I was standing at my private door, looking out into the street. It was getting dusk. The service in the cathedral was over, and I thought that every one had gone. All of a sudden I saw the little door open which we call the Dean's door, and which you know is right in front of my house. Some one came out and walked quickly across the street toward my place. I drew back and went inside. When I got inside the bar I saw that there was some one in a little compartment which only holds about two comfortably, and which I call a private wine-bar. I heard him ask Miss Parkins, one of my young ladies, if we had such a thing as a glass of good sound port."

The Dean shuddered—he scarcely knew why. The fact is that port was the liquid of which the Bishop, in his less stalwart days, had been esteemed such an excellent judge.

"The compartment in which he was is meant for parties who wish to keep themselves quite private. It's boarded up on either side, and in front of it, facing the bar, is a panel of glazed glass set in a mahogany frame, with just enough room between it and the counter to pass, say, a glass of wine. If the party inside wants to keep himself to himself, it's next to impossible to see his face unless you go around by the door in the front. I couldn't see this party's face, but I could see enough of him to see he was a parson. He was short and stout"—the Bishop was short and stout—"and though he had the collar of his coat turned up, it wasn't turned up enough to hide the collar of his shirt. Seeing that I had seen him come out of the Dean's own door in the cathedral, and that he was a parson, things seemed a little queer. So I asked Miss Parkins, on the quiet, if she knew who he was. I could see she couldn't altogether make it out. She said, although she hadn't seen his face, she seemed to know his voice. Well, he liked my port. I heard him say so; and I heard him tell Miss Parkins that he was considered as good a judge of port wine as any man in England." Again the Dean was conscious of a shiver. "Anyhow, he drank a bottle of it before he went."

"A bottle, Mr. Boulter?"

"Yes, sir, a bottle; and one glass over. Directly he had gone, my potman went into the private wine-bar for something or other, and as soon as he got inside he called out, 'Hallo! the gentleman's left his bag behind.' And he handed a little leather bag across the bar. Any gentleman who had put away a bottle of port wine in the time that gentleman had done might forget a trifle of a bag like that. It was a beautiful little bag. I had never seen one quite like it before. It had got some initials and a crest stamped on one side. I opened it to see if there was anything inside by means of which I could identify it, and return it to the owner. There was something inside—a sermon. I never saw anything more beautifully written than that sermon—it was like copperplate." Once more the Dean was conscious of a shudder travelling down his spine. The Bishop's beautiful calligraphy was famous—a fair handwriting is nowadays too rare. "On the front page was written the Bishop's name and address in full, and in the top left-hand corner was written: 'Preached in the cathedral on the afternoon of the 13th of November, 189—.' That's yesterday afternoon, sir. I've brought that bag with me. You'll find the sermon still inside. Perhaps you know whose bag that is, sir?"

Mr. Boulter picked up a small leather bag which had been lying, hitherto unnoticed, upon a chair, and handed it to the astonished Dean. The Dean did know whose bag it was—he knew too well. There was no mistaking those initials and that crest. There was no necessity to examine the sermon which Mr. Boulter assured him was inside. The Dean gazed at that excellent example of fine workmanship in leather bags as if he realized that he had all at once become an actor in what might turn out to be a tragedy. Words proceeded from his stammering lips:

"You are, I am sure, too reasonable a man, Mr. Boulter, to jump to impossible conclusions from imperfect premises."

"I don't know what you call 'imperfect premises.' Directly I saw the name and address which was written on the front page of that sermon, Miss Parkins cried out, 'Why, it was the Bishop's voice!' She stared at me as if she was going to have a fit—and well she might. Miss Parkins is a good girl, as all my young ladies are, and, indeed, everybody else about my place, although I say it." Mr. Boulter glared at the Dean with eyes which were full of meaning. "She never misses a chance of hearing the Bishop preach when she can get one, and if there's any one who ought to know the Bishop's voice it's her. It seems to me, begging your pardon, sir, that I ought to have a reward for bringing that leather bag back safe and sound."

"Certainly, Mr. Boulter. Any sum in reason you like to mention."

"The reward I want is the renewal of my lease."

"That, as I have already told you, is"——

"Excuse me just one moment, sir. You see that?" Taking an envelope out of an inner pocket of his coat, Mr. Boulter flourished it in the Dean's face. "I've a boy who lives in London, and writes for the papers; a smart chap he is, and well respected in his trade. I've written an account of how the Bishop preached a sermon on temperance in the cathedral—a fine sermon it was, I'm told by those who heard it—and of how he then walked straight out of the cathedral into my public house, and put away a bottle of old port, and got so drunk that he forgot his bag and left it behind him, with the sermon which he had just been preaching on temperance inside of it. That account's in this envelope. I'm going to send it to my boy, and I'm going to tell him to turn it into money; and I'll lay you what odds you please—although I'm no more a betting man than you are—that before a week is over the tale will be told in every paper in England—ah! and known all the world over. You're going to take away my living. My grandfather kept The Rose and Crown decent, my father kept it decent, and I've kept it decent; there's never been even so much as a shadow of a complaint made against me by the police, nor by no one. And yet you cathedral gentlemen have taken a sudden fad into your heads, and you're going to ruin me. Very well, ruin me! You think you're going to do good to the cause of temperance by shutting up The Rose and Crown. What harm do you suppose will be done to the cause of temperance by that tale being told, as they do tell that sort of tale nowadays, in all the newspapers of the world? I guess the cause of temperance will not get over that tale for years—it will be always being told. At the very least, if I do have to go I will take care that somebody else goes with me. Now which is it to be—am I to have my lease renewed, or am I to post this envelope?"

The Dean hesitated.

"In any case, as you must be aware, Mr. Boulter, the matter is not one which can be decided on the spur of the moment; the decision is not with me."

"Understand me, sir. If I go away from here without a promise of renewal, I post this letter. I know as well as you know that in the whole business your voice will be the ruling voice. You give me a bit of writing in which you undertake to do your best to get my lease renewed, and I will give you this envelope with what's inside. And I will give you my promise never to breathe a word that the Bishop ever so much as came near my place. As for Miss Parkins, I know she won't speak unless she's forced. She's a religious girl; she thinks a lot of the Bishop, and she's too much shocked at the whole affair. I never saw a girl so upset. Now which is it to be?"

The Dean still hesitated—with sufficient cause.

"What term of renewal would you require?"

"The last lease was for ninety-nine years, and I want this lease to be for ninety-nine."

"Ninety-nine years, Mr. Boulter?"

Mr. Boulter did not get a promise of renewal for ninety-nine years, or anything like it, but he did get "a bit of writing." With that "bit of writing" in a secure division of his plethoric pocketbook, he went away. The Dean was left to his reflections. The leather bag he held in one hand, the envelope which the landlord of The Rose and Crown had given him he held in the other. Putting down the bag, he tore the envelope into halves, then into quarters, and crossing the room he dropped the fragments in the fire which burned brightly in the grate.

"Terrible! Terrible!" This he said as he watched the pieces of paper being consumed by the flames. Then he seemed to endeavor to pull himself together. "Well, I shall have to tell them. I must give reasons for the thing which I have done. The tale will have to travel so far, but"—the Dean pressed his lips together; few men's countenances were capable of assuming a severer aspect than Dean Pettifer's—"I will make it my especial business to see that it goes no further." He still seemed to hesitate before returning to the apartment in which his colleagues were awaiting him. "I must say that I never thought it of him. I have been always conscious that in his latitudinarianism there was a certain element of danger. But I never dreamed that he was capable of such a thing as this—no, never!"

It was with a distinctly unsatisfactory look upon his face that he made his reappearance in the little impromptu meeting. The criminatory leather bag he carried in his left hand. It is not impossible that those who were present became immediately conscious that with the Dean, since they had seen him last, all things had not gone well. The buzz of conversation, which had been audible as he opened the door, ceased upon his entrance, as though something in his bearing acted as a damper.

The somewhat awkward silence was broken by Canon Gorse.

"Well, was Boulter troublesome?"

The Dean laid the bag in front of him upon the table.

"He was." The Dean carefully wiped his glasses. There was a suggestion of curious expectation in the eyes which were fixed upon him. Their owners already perceived that there was something in the air. Was it possible that the landlord of The Rose and Crown had behaved in the manner which, in the estimation of some persons, is a natural characteristic of individuals of his class, and had been guilty of actual violence in the sacred precincts of the Deanery? "He was troublesome in a sense for which, on this occasion, I will simply say that I was unprepared; and to such a degree that I have given him what amounts to a virtual undertaking that his lease shall be renewed."

This was evidently not the sort of thing for which his listeners had been waiting—one could see it by their faces. Some of them changed color, and some of their jaws dropped open. Canon Gorse stared at the speaker as if he found it difficult to believe that his own ears were capable of fulfilling their normal functions.

"Pettifer, impossible!" Perceiving that the word might seem too strong, he amended it. "That is to say, how do you mean?"

The Dean leaned over the table. His attitude, indeed his whole manner, suggested severity tempered by sorrow.

"Before I say anything further I wish to have an understanding with all of you that not one word of what I am about to utter will be breathed by any one of you to any living creature—and by that I mean neither to your wives, nor to your daughters, nor to any member of your household—that it will be received as though it came to you under the seal of the confessional." There was silence. "If any one feels himself, for any cause whatever, unable to give such a pledge, then I must respectfully ask that person at once to withdraw."

No one did withdraw. No one said either aye or nay. So it may be supposed that the pledge which the Dean required was unanimously given. That the Dean understood that to be the case was evident. He held up the little leather bag in front of him as if it were some dreadful thing.

"This bag is the Bishop's—our beloved Bishop's bag. I know it, of my own knowledge, to be the bag which he had with him in the cathedral yesterday afternoon. It still contains the MS. of the sermon which the Bishop preached, and which we all rejoiced to hear. This bag has just been brought to me by the landlord of The Rose and Crown. It was left, unintentionally left, on his premises by a person who, at the close of yesterday afternoon's service, went out of the Dean's door of the cathedral into one of Mr. Boulter's private bars, and there and then consumed a bottle of port wine."

The Dean ceased. There again was silence—there well might be. The Dean again went on:

"A son of Mr. Boulter is engaged on one of those scurrilous journals which are called society papers. Mr. Boulter proposed to send this story up to his son to print. On the understanding that the matter shall be confined to his own breast I have deemed it wisdom to give him, as I have said, what virtually amounts to an undertaking that his lease shall be renewed. That is all I have to say. You will feel with me that it is too much. May I ask you not to speak of this matter even among yourselves, but, as I shall do, to do your best to blot it from your minds? Let us, if we can, forget that this thing has ever been. And now, with your permission, I will wish you all good-day."

They went like a flock of sheep, although there was almost a suspicion of pathos in the manner of their parting. When they were gone the Dean set himself to perform a task of the exceeding delicacy of which, to say the least, he was fully conscious. He was not a man to palter with what he deemed his duty. He was certainly not a man to shrink from doing a thing merely because the thing was disagreeable. Therefore scarcely had the last of his colleagues turned his back on the Deanery when he put the little leather bag into a larger bag, and, with that larger bag grasped firmly in his hand, he strode off to the palace.

He was going to make it his business to see that, without any further unnecessary loss of time, the Bishop came into what was, undoubtedly, his own again.

He found his lordship in the library. The Bishop was dictating to his secretary, the Rev. John Budgen. The secretary was seated at a table; the Bishop took his ease in a capacious arm chair. As the Dean entered his lordship greeted him with that genial heartiness for which the Bishop of Boundersville is famed. Not a trace of guilty consciousness about him anywhere—not a trace! It was with a sort of shock that the Dean noticed that there was nothing of the kind.

"How do, Pettifer? I'm doing what I call my morning task of stone-breaking—writing letters by proxy to a lot of people who have more time on their hands than they know what to do with, and who, therefore, insist upon wasting mine. Anything particular to say to me?"

The Dean was, perhaps, too refined—the thing is possible. He was not only a fine scholar, he was a fine gentleman. He was of opinion that dignitaries, and particularly all dignitaries of the Church, should have the standard of manners which was peculiarly his own. The Bishop's heartiness, his rough-and-ready methods of expression, had always grated on his high-strung sensibilities; especially did they grate just then.

"I am bound to state, my lord, that what I have to say to you is of the first importance."

The Bishop looked at him a little quizzically. Possibly the Dean's exaggerated preciseness appealed to a sense which there is no reason why even a bishop should be without.

"Excuse me, Budgen; I'll ring when I'm ready." The secretary withdrew. "Now, Pettifer, fire away. Who killed the cat, and which cat's been killed?"

Such a fashion of speech was actually offensive to the Dean. Perhaps the spirit of mischief still lingered in the Bishop's breast; perhaps, at times, the Bishop found the Dean almost as trying as the Dean found him. Under the circumstances such a bearing on the part of the Bishop shocked the Dean almost into speechlessness. He gazed at his spiritual superior in a manner which, unless he was mistaken, made his lordship wince. "Has your lordship not missed your lordship's sermon bag?"

At the question his lordship plainly started.

"My sermon bag, Pettifer? What do you mean?"

"My lord, I mean what I say."

The Bishop was perturbed. Rising from his chair, he began to fidget about the room. "Why do you ask?"

"Because it has been returned to me."

"Returned to you—no!"

"Yes, my lord; I have it here." The Dean produced the little bag from inside the larger one. He held it up in front of him as he had held it up in front of him at the impromptu meeting at the Deanery. "I will not ask how it came to stray from your lordship's keeping."

The Bishop looked at the Dean; the Dean looked straight at him. It was evident that his lordship was not completely at his ease.

"I perceive that you have heard the story."

"I regret, my lord, to say that I have."

The Bishop plainly flushed; perhaps he found the Dean's tone and manner slightly galling.

"Perhaps it was not quite the thing to do, but"—his lordship shrugged his shoulders—"what does it matter?"

The Dean, in his turn, winced.

"What does it matter, my lord? Surely your lordship knows that it matters."

"How did the bag come into your possession, Pettifer?"

"It was brought to me by Mr. Boulter, the landlord of The Rose and Crown."

"Boulter!—The Rose and Crown—!—No, by George!"

His lordship said, "By George!" and as he said it the Dean shrunk back as if he had received a blow.

"Mr. Boulter, as the price of his silence, extracted from me a promise that his lease should be renewed."

The Bishop woke up. He showed more alertness than he had hitherto displayed.

"You promised him that his lease should be renewed—the lease of The Rose and Crown?"

"I did. I thought it better that I should do so than that such a story should be told."

"Story? What story?"

The Dean, before he answered, indulged himself with a pause for consideration.

"My lord, if any word I may utter seems lacking in respect, as coming from me to you, I entreat your pardon. My lord, when I heard that, after preaching a sermon, and so grand a sermon, upon total abstinence, you passed straight from the cathedral pulpit to the bar of a common public house, and there drank so large a quantity of wine that, in the temporary forgetfulness which it occasioned, you left the sermon itself behind you in the bar, I felt that it were better that I should promise almost anything than that such a story should be told."

As he listened the Bishop's countenance underwent a variety of changes. When the Dean had finished the Bishop dropped into a chair, and—laughed. Not a genteel simper, but a loud and a long guffaw. The Dean felt that he could not endure such levity, even from a bishop—his own bishop, too.

"My lord, in such a matter you may see occasion for merriment, but if you could have seen, at the Deanery, the faces of the cathedral clergy as I told to them this story"——

"Pettifer, what do you mean?"

Springing to his feet, the Bishop grasped the speaker by the arm. The Dean was startled.

"I say, if you could only have seen their faces"——

"Do you mean to say that you have told this story to any one?"

"I was constrained to state my reasons for giving such a promise to the landlord of The Rose and Crown."

"I hardly know if I ought not to strike you, Arthur Pettifer."

"My lord!"

"I hardly know if I ought not to pillory you in the market-place, and so compel you to do penance for your slanderous tongue. I have long been conscious of a certain pharisaical narrowness in your mental and in your moral outlook. I have seen in you what has seemed to me a hideous tendency to think the worst both of women and of men. But I never thought you capable of such gross obliquity of judgment as you yourself appear now to own to. Is it possible that you believed that such a story as you have told me could be true?"

The Dean had turned quite pale. He seemed to speak beneath his breath.

"Is it possible that Boulter lied?"

"Is it possible, Arthur Pettifer, that you could believe that I—I, Ralph Ingall, with whose life's history you are as well acquainted almost as myself—could so perjure myself that, as God's minister, in God's house, I could pledge myself never again to let alcohol pass my lips in any shape or form, and that then, with that pledge still warm upon my lips, I could pass straight into a pothouse, and stupefy myself with wine?"

"Was it—was it Budgen, then?"

"Budgen? Budgen? Pettifer, this is worse and worse! You know that Budgen has never touched a drop of alcoholic stimulant since the day that he was born. I will tell you the story of that bag so far as I know it myself. And I will see that your promise to the man Boulter is kept both in the spirit and the letter. I will place it upon you, as an enduring penance, that for the continued existence of his drink-shop you, and you alone, shall be responsible."

The Dean was silent. He seemed to totter as a man who received a crushing blow. The Bishop paced up and down the room. Like an accusing spirit—possessed of a tolerable corporation—he poured out upon the Dean a curious, correct and circumstantial history of the adventures of his sermon-bag.

"There was a man at my college whose name I need not mention. We were ordained together. I will put it gently, and will say that he did not take full advantage of his opportunities. I believe that, for some time now, he has ceased to exercise his clerical office. He has become a reporter for the '———'" —the Bishop named a paper which all good Churchmen are supposed to read—"and he came to me yesterday afternoon, into the vestry, after I had done my sermon. Possibly you may have seen him there. He told me that he had come down from town specially to report my sermon. According to him the train had been late, and he only arrived in time to hear a part. He asked me if I would let him see my notes. On the spur of the moment I handed him my bag, with the sermon in it. I told him he might make, what he expressed a desire to make, a verbatim copy, and that he was then to return to me my property. I felt immediately afterward that I had, perhaps, not done the wisest possible thing. But it was then too late. After the story you have told me, what he did with bag and sermon I can guess."

While the Bishop was still speaking a servant appeared at the door.

"My lord, a person—I believe a clergyman—desires me to inform your lordship that he wishes to see you at once upon very pressing business."

"Yes, my lord; that is so."

The scandalized servant turned to find that the person alluded to had, uninvited, found his way into the Bishop's presence. The Bishop recognized his visitor; he signified the same to the servant who had not shown him in.

The visitor in question was an individual of somewhat doubtful appearance. He looked half cleric, half layman. He was short and stout, and so far resembled the Bishop, but the resemblance went no further. The Bishop, taking possession of the little leather bag which the Dean still retained, held it out to the newcomer.

"Well, sir, have you come to make another copy of my sermon? As you perceive, it has been returned to me, but not by you."

The stranger wiped his brow. He seemed more than a trifle embarrassed.

"I regret to say that I have not yet taken a copy of it, my lord. The fact is, my lord, that, as I told you yesterday, I left town without having lunched, and after leaving your lordship in the cathedral I felt so exhausted that I just stepped across the road to take a glass of wine"—

"Quite so, sir. I understand too well. Since my sermon upon temperance has once been returned by the landlord of a tavern, I do not think that I care to run the risk of its reaching me by means of a similar channel a second time. So far as you are concerned, sir, my sermon must go unreported." The Bishop rang the bell. The servant reappeared. "Dawes, show this gentleman out."

The gentleman was shown out, though it seemed, from his manner, that there still was something which he would have wished to say.

When he had gone the Bishop placed the little leather bag upon a table. He turned to the Dean. He looked at him, and he said, more in sorrow than in anger:

"Pettifer, how long does it take you to know a man?"—(The Cornhill.

YOUNG WINDEBANK.

(By Margaret S. Woods.)

They shot young Windebank just here,
By Merton, where the sun
Strikes on the wall. 'Twas in a year
Of blood the deed was done.

At morning from the meadows dim
He watched them dig his grave.
Was this in truth the end for him,
The well-beloved and brave?

He marched with soldier scarf and sword,
Set free to die that day,
And free to speak once more the word
That marshalled men obey.

But silent on the silent band
That faced him, stern as death,
He looked, and on the summer land
And on the grave beneath.

Then, with a sudden smile and proud,
He waved his plume and cried,
"The king! the king!" and laughed aloud;
"The king! the king!" and died.

Let none affirm he vainly fell,
And paid the barren cost
Of having loved and served too well
A poor cause and a lost.

He in the soul's eternal cause
Went forth as martyrs must—
The kings who make the spirit laws
And rule us from the dust;

Whose wills, unshaken by the breath
Of adverse Fate, endure,
To give us honor strong as death
And loyal love as sure.

SONG TO ALYSOUN.

Modernized by Anna Robertson Brown for Poet-Lore.

Between the March and sweet Aprille
When sprays begin to spring
The little birdling hath her will
In her own tongue may sing.
'Tis then I live in love-longing
For her, the comeliest, dearest thing
That me may gladness bring:
I'm fast in her prisoun.
A happy fate have I been lent,
I ween from heaven to me 'tis sent—
From women all my love is bent
To light on Alysoun!

In hue her hair is fair as flax.
Her brows are brown, her even black;
What laughing looks she casts on me!
How shapely small her tiny waist!
If she will only grant to me
Her loving mate on earth to be,
Long life I shall not pray—with joy
Near dead, I'll fall adoun.
A happy fate have I been lent,
I ween from heaven to me 'tis sent—
From women all my love is bent
To light on Alysoun!

By night the while I toss and wake,
My cheeks are waxen pale and wan,
Lady, 'tis all for thy dear sake
Longing has led me on!
In all the world there is not one
Who every charm might dwell upon:
Her neck is whiter than the swan,
The fairest maid in toun!
A happy fate have I been lent,
I ween from heaven to me 'tis sent—
From women all my love is bent
To light on Alysoun!

With wooing I am desolate,
Weary as water in a weir!
Lest any rob me of my mate
I grieve with sigh and tear.
But better to suffer erewhiles sore
Than mourn forevermore!
Fairest on earth, my song I pour,
Ah, hearken to my roun:
A happy fate have I been lent,
I ween from heaven to me 'tis sent—
From women all my love is bent
To light on Alysoun!

JANE JONES.

Ben King in The Southern Magazine.

Jane Jones keeps a-whisperin' to me all the time,
An' says: "Why don't you make it a rule
To study your lessons, an' work hard an' learn,
An' never be absent from school?
Remember the story of Elihu Burritt,
How he clumb up to the top;
Got all the knowledge 'at he ever had
Down in the blacksmithing shop."
Jane Jones she honestly said it was so;
Mebbe he did—I dunno;
'Course, what's a-keepin' me 'way from the top
Is not never having no blacksmithing shop.

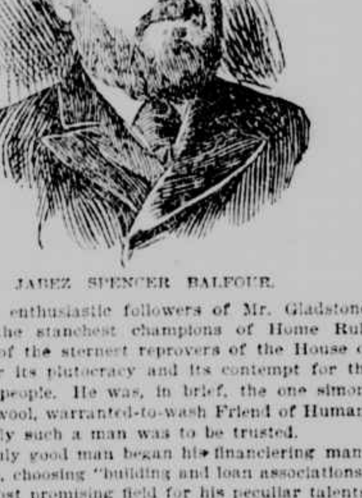
She said 'at Ben Franklin was awfully poor,
But full o' ambition an' brains,
An' studied philosophy all 'is hull life—
An' see what he got for his pains.
He brought electricity out of the sky
With a kite an' the lightnin' an' key,
So we're owin' him more'n any one else
Fer all the bright lights 'at we see.
Jane Jones she actually said it was so;
Mebbe he did—I dunno;
'Course, what's allers been hinderin' me
Is not havin' any kite, lightnin' or key.

Jane Jones said Columbus was out at the knees
When he first thought up his big scheme;
An' all of the Spaniards 'an Italians, too,
They laughed and just said 'twas a dream;
But Queen Isabella she listen'd to him,
An' pawned all her jewels o' worth,
An' bought 'im the Santa Marier 'nd said:
"Go hunt up the rest of the earth."
Jane Jones she honestly said it was so;
Mebbe he did—I dunno;
'Course, that may all be, but you must allow
They ain't any land to discover just now.

THE STORY OF JABEZ.

PIETY, PATRIOTISM AND FRAUD.

Jabez Balfour has been caught at last in Argentina, and is being taken back to England to be tried for the wholesale crimes with which he is charged. If one-half of the accusations against him be true, he must rank as one of the very foremost swindlers of the age. Scarcely since the bursting of the South Sea Bubble has there been a financial scheme so widely ruinous to confiding investors as his operations. The losers through the collapse of his companies were literally to be numbered by hundreds of thousands. These were largely the very people who could least afford to lose—widows and orphans and aged people of small means. They had been induced to invest because "Mr. Balfour was such a good man!" His father and mother had been temperance lecturers. He was a temperance lecturer. He was a leader in church affairs, particularly eloquent in public prayer and exhortation. He looked with the strongest disapproval upon theatres, music-halls, cards, dancing, and all such worldly things. He was, moreover, a Member of the House of Commons, where he was one of



JABEZ SPENCER BALFOUR.

the most enthusiastic followers of Mr. Gladstone, one of the stanchest champions of Home Rule and one of the sternest reprovers of the House of Lords for its plutocracy and its contempt for the common people. He was, in brief, the one simon-pure, all-wool, warranted-to-wash Friend of Humanity. Surely such a man was to be trusted.

This truly good man began his financiering many years ago, choosing "building and loan associations" as the most promising field for his peculiar talents. Strange as it may appear, he laid the foundations of his colossal scheme upon the ruins of various similar schemes that had ended in disaster—to their confiding stockholders. "The Liberator," his chief concern, was built upon the ruins of the Alliance National Land, Building and Investment Society—with which two of his later colleagues, the Rev. Dawson Burns and Mr. Dibley, were associated, the former having acted as auditor—and the Estates Bank and a number of other allied concerns known as the Alliance Group. These undertakings were popularly associated with the United Kingdom Alliance, though after the crash the latter body very emphatically declared that the companies had no connection with its organization. The bank closed its doors in 1866, and widespread distress was the result, attracting too little attention amidst the more colossal failures of that disastrous year. Yet the whole Alliance Group had been formed to afford safe investment for the funds of thrifty temperance adherents, and Jabez Balfour, so far from being discouraged by its fate, found in it the idea of all his future operations. The Alliance Group had ingeniously suggested temperance, and the Alliance of Manchester. Therefore, said Jabez, we must revive this principle; join temperance and religion, and appeal to the same saving classes. Having previously had some experience in the office of a firm of Parliamentary agents, he came modestly before the world in 1867 as the virtual founder of the Lands Allotment Company, from which, seven months later, was developed the Liberator Building Society. The basis of the organization was expressed in its Latin motto, "Libera sedes liberum facit"—a free home makes a free man. Its name was a success; hundreds of Congregationalists were attracted by its prospectus, from a vague idea that it had something to do with the Liberation Society, and possibly trading on this belief an appeal was made to Nonconformist ministers and others connected with temperance and religious societies all over the land to promote its beneficent objects. In the first year they received 1 per cent commission on the shares and deposits, and subsequently ½ per cent, and in the end a round sum of $705,000 was paid in this way. How thoroughly the moral idea was present in these proceedings was shown when, in 1871, on the society removing to its new offices, a resolution was adopted "that on the occasion of taking possession this day of our new premises, the directors desire to record their own sense of thankfulness for the prosperity with which, as they believe, God has hitherto blessed their efforts in the establishment of this business."

In starting these companies it was, of course, declared that they were essentially safe, because their main business was "the legitimate one of a building society." In point of fact, though this continued to be, up to the very eve of the smash, the keynote of all the published statements, the bulk of the transactions had become of a widely different character. In 1875 another association was hatched, the "Lands Allotment Company," with practically the same directorate, and Jabez Spencer Balfour as the controlling genius. The relations between these were extensive and peculiar; in five years the Liberator had financed the other two to the extent of $960,000; its shareholders and depositors knew little, if anything, of the state of affairs, while, according to the examination in the Bankruptcy Court, its leading directors and officials were equally innocent of all knowledge—the one thing in which they all agreed being implicit and unlimited confidence in "Mr. Balfour."

From this period onward there was a regular succession of new companies. It has been well said that the secret of Balfourian finance was, "When in difficulty start a new company." Thus there followed in succession Hobbs & Co., the London and General Bank, the Building Securities Company, George Newman & Co., the Real Estates Company, and the Sheringham Development Company. In most of these concerns there was a regularly paid dividend of 5 per cent to the shareholders and 4 per cent to depositors. The recklessness of the financing was never surpassed. Balfour discovered a progressive builder at Croydon named Hobbs, a man in a comparatively small way of business in 1878, and a member of the House and Lands Trust. Such large amounts were advanced to Hobbs that in 1885, when he was practically insolvent, he owed the Liberator $3,500,000, and the Building Securities Company and Hobbs & Co. (limited) were successively started to take up the concern. Finally, when Hobbs failed—having in the mean time constructed those huge blocks, the Whitehall Court, on the Thames embankment; Hyde Park Court, the Salisbury Estate Building, Carlisle Mansions and others—this limited concern was indebted to the Liberator to the extent of $10,495,000. From 1885 forward there was no choice but to make fresh and ever-fresh advances to Hobbs, and the parent company had to forego its claims and negotiate first, second and third mortgages in front of its own. The system on which this was done was simplicity itself. Each new company took over some of the liabilities of the old ones, and these were put down as so many successful transactions, severally yielding a handsome profit and splendid security—or, as the phrase went, "a large and noble property"—to the Liberator.

Apart from these transactions, "the Balfour Group" were financing properties of a more or less speculative character all over the country. There were the Ilford, the Tilbury, and the Romford estates, Meersbrook Park, the Billiter-st. property, the Hockley Hall Colliery and sundry chemical works. All these involved scores of thousands of pounds, paid apparently with a magnificent disregard to real value. The advances to friends were on an equally liberal scale. The sum of $235,000 was allowed to a Mr. Kenyon Benham, who alleged that he had an interest in a will said to have been lost on the Underground Railway, but never legally proved. Richard Kenyon Benham and Albert Bennett Benham, for their share in these proceedings, including the forgery of the will, are undergoing terms of fourteen and five years' penal servitude, respectively.

Space would fail to tell of the manner in which the Balfour Group financed Newman, another progressive builder, who was also formed, like Hobbs, into a limited company. Newman has been sentenced to five years', Hobbs to twelve years' and Henry Granville Wright, a solicitor intimately mixed up with all these proceedings, to twelve years' penal servitude. Though disaster followed these concerns from first to last dividends were always found in the new subscriptions and deposits, and directors' remuneration never failed. Under the latter head Jabez Balfour and his colleagues divided among them from the seven leading companies a total of $892,770. The total amount of ruin brought upon investors through the final crash may be reckoned thus: Liberator Society, stockholders, $8,305,325, and depositors, $8,261,460; Lands Allotment Company, capital subscribed, $3,831,050; House and Lands Trust, stockholders, $360,725, and depositors, $7,906,725; Building Securities Company, capital subscribed, $1,318,675; and Hobbs & Co., capital subscribed, $305,810. These aggregate $30,289,770, a colossal sum. But there are various other items which, if added, would bring it up to nearly or quite $35,000,000.

A MILD BRAND OF SCOTCH.

From The Washington Post.

The Colonel was as drunk as a lord and equally as dignified last night, and the combination was irresistibly funny. His apparel was faultless from his high hat to his patent-leather shoes, and the immaculate condition of his linen showed that his jag was of very recent acquirement. He steadied himself before the Metropolitan mahogany and blinked tenderly at Billy Burdine. There was affection emphatic in his smile and it curled up the corners of his mouth in such a tight knot that utterance was difficult. He made two or three efforts to speak, and then a shiver ran through his frame.

"Ur-r-r-r" he ejaculated, "Horr skosh, Bildy."

"Hot Scotch, did you say, colonel?" inquired the barkeeper.

"C'rect," was the sententious reply.

Burdine looked him over and picked up a lump of sugar with the tongs.

"We have just received a remarkably mild and soothing brand of Scotch whiskey," he remarked, as he placed the sugar in a glass and turned on the faucet of the boiler. "I'm sure there is nothing else quite like it in town."

He stirred the water and sugar together, made a feint with a bottle, deftly twisted a piece of lemon peel and dropped it into the decoction and placed the glass before the colonel. The latter raised it to his lips, and every one could see that he was bracing himself to keep his hand steady. He sipped the liquid with the dainty delicacy of a connoisseur.

"Thash good," he said, with emphasis, "shimply jeelishus. Make er nozzer."

Burdine made him another and then another. The colonel straightened himself up and smiled broadly again.

"Thash stuff knocker cole out. Guesh'll go ter bed."

He went out and got into a waiting cab, and he won't know until he reads this that the three hot Scotches he drank at the Metropolitan on Thursday night were composed of nothing else but hot water, sugar, and, as they say in the Bowery, "a squoze o' limmin peel."